Expenditure on SC/ST welfare

*256. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ever since UPA Government assumed power in 2004, the total expenditure on welfare of SCs and STs has not been more than one per cent of the total allocation in any of the past four budgets; and

(b) whether the CAG Report for 2006-07 has revealed that even this parltry allocation for SC/ST welfare is misused, especially in upgrading their educational level, causing widening of the gap in the Gross Drop-out Rate and Gross Enrolment Rate between SC/ST and general caegory students?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) Information is being collected.

Policy for mega power projects

*257. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has formulated a policy for mega power projects, wherein they would be entitled for customs duty exemption on project imports, a 10 year income tax holiday and deemed export status; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) and (b) In terms of the existing Mega Power Policy of the Government, operational since 1995, and last modified in April, 2006 fiscal concessions and benefits available to mega power projects are as follows:

(i) **Zero Customs Duty:** In terms of the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue) No. 21/2002-Customs dated 1st March, 2002 read together with No. 49/2006-Customs dated 26th May, 2006, the import of capital equipment would be free of customs duty for these projects.

(ii) **Deemed Export Benefits:** Under Chapter 8 of the Foreign Trade Policy, Deemed Export Benefits are available to domestic bidders for mega power projects, both under public and private sector, on following the stipulations prescribed therein.

Income Tax benefits: In addition to the above concessions/benefits, income-tax holiday as per Section 80-IA of the Income Tax Act, 1961 is also available to the mega power projects.

Power plants satisfying the following minimum capacity conditions are eligible for availing the mega power benefits subject to fulfilment of other qualifying requiements in the Mega Power Policy:—

(a) an Inter-state thermal power plant of a capacity of 700 MW or more, located in the States of Jammu and Mashmir, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura; or